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TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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Associate Editor
Luke Périard

Production Assistant

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Mailing Team
Louis L'Arrivee
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Membership application, correspondence:
THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB
Box 35069, Westgate P.O. Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 1A2

Information:
(613) 722-3050

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Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Ontario

Susan M. Barker
Andrea D. Colbert
Angela Darwin
Ian J. Davidson
Jennifer H. Fellows
Sara Jinha-Msham
A. Lokar
Carol Milstone
Marg. A. Richardson & Family

Henry Steger
Chair, Membership Committee
August 2009

Wolf Grove

Gary Bell

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has protected a 225-acre (91-hectare) property in Mississippi Mills, eastern Lanark County, thanks in part to the determination of Martha Webber to see her land protected. Mrs. Webber's hopes were realized following successful fundraising for both the purchase and essential long-term management of the land.

"Martha Webber is a locally known and respected botanist and naturalist," said NCC's Eastern Ontario Program Manager, Gary Bell. "She had received offers from others wishing to buy her property but, quite admirably, preferred to see it protected for conservation."

The property is the largest single landholding within the provincially significant Wolf Grove Wetlands Complex and contains some of the best examples of diverse hardwood forest and wetlands. The largest open body of water within the natural area, Bowley Lake, is completely contained within this newly protected property.

"That property has meant a lot to us over the years for camping and exploring," remarked Mrs. Webber. "The more I learn about the variety of habitat, the more I am impressed with our luck in acquiring it and the need to preserve it. Now it provides for the future. Best investment we ever made."

Existing inventory data revealed that a high number of regionally rare species were located on the property including endangered Butternut and globally-rare Rugulose Grapefern. Also supported on the property is the most easterly example of a rare Poison Sumac Swamp community and the Red-shouldered Hawk, a bird recently removed from the Species at Risk list. The protection of areas like this will help ensure the hawk stays off the list.

Significant funding for this project was obtained through the Nature Conservancy of Canada-Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Greenlands Program under which NCC must match provincial funds. Matching private funds for this project were raised through dedicated efforts by the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' [Club], the local community, and a generous donation from Mr. Leonard Lee, founder of Lee Valley Tools and Canica Designs.

This property will be owned and managed by NCC. A complete biological inventory of the property is currently being carried out, which will lead to a better understanding of the natural values of the property and how to best manage it for future generations. Mrs. Webber has used the property as a place to lead nature groups in the past and it is anticipated that this type of educational use will be continued.

The Wolf Grove Wetlands Complex is part of the larger Middle Mississippi River Wetlands Natural Area, a large series of interconnecting and isolated wetlands extending from Lanark to Pakenham. The natural area includes wooded swamps and marshes, fens, and associated aquatic systems and the terrestrial habitats that support them.

Editor's note: This was a press release from the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Photos are available. Contact Gary Bell, Eastern Ontario Program Manager, at *gary.bell@natureconservancy.ca* or 613-862-3331.

Sun Dog

Linda Jeays

This dying afternoon
on the brink of winter
an improbable fireball
hangs from a wisp
of cirrus cloud
brief compensation
for falling leaves.

What Is It?

[A series featuring brief information on the identification and occurrence of biological phenomena that are a source of frequent questions to the biology community.]

1. Tar Spot Disease of Maples in the Ottawa District

M. P. Corlett[1] *and P. M. Catling*[2]

The occurrence and identification of tar spots, *Rhytisma* spp., on maple leaves is described. *Rhytisma acerinum* on planted and escaped Norway Maples has become increasingly prevalent in the Ottawa area over the past few years, but it is only one of three species of *Rhytisma* found on maples in Canada. Other species affect native maples and willows.

The fall of 2006 was unusual because the upper surface of the leaves of so many ornamental Norway Maple trees in Ottawa were covered with black tar-like spots up to 3 cm in diameter. It was as if blobs of hot tar had fallen onto the leaves and dried down as raised black shiny spots on the upper leaf surface. As the leaves of the Norway maples turned a pale yellow in late October and early November, the black spots became very obvious, particularly when the leaves fell to the ground. As people raked the fallen leaves they suddenly noticed the black spots and, of course, there was a major concern. What was going on? Where did they come from? Was my maple tree going to die?

People wanted to kill the source of the black spots. Black spots are discomforting. The black spot has been symbolic of a judgement requiring execution, as in the novel 'Treasure Island'. In 2007 and 2008 maple tar spot was less abundant than in 2006, but still there were many inquiries from the public as well as a few articles in the newspaper. As it happens, the black spots on maples are nothing to worry about. They are caused by Ascomycete fungi belonging to the genus *Rhytisma* which

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[1,2] Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environmental Health, Biodiversity, Saunders Bldg., C.E.F., Ottawa K1A 0C6

[1] *corlettm@agr.gc.ca* [2] *catlingp@agr.gc.ca.*

produce spores (ascospores) that infect the leaves. In general there are a number of distinct species of *Rhytisma* which infect different trees and shrubs. For example, the small black tar spots, each about 3 mm across, seen on leaves of willow (*Salix*) species (Figure 1) are caused by a species of *Rhytisma* called *Rhytisma salicinum*. A

Figure 1. Rhytisma salicinum *on leaves of* Salix glauca, *DAOM 145064. All illustrations in this article are from dried specimens in the National Mycological Herbarium (DAOM), Eastern Cereal and Oilseed Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ottawa.*

large black tar spot about 20 to perhaps 30 mm across, produced on leaves of ornamental Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) in eastern North America (Figure 2) is caused by the species *Rhytisma acerinum* (Hudler et al. 1998). A somewhat smaller tar spot, about 10 mm or less but sometimes up to 20 mm across, on leaves of native North American maples including red maple (*Acer rubrum*), silver maple (*Acer sacharinum*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and other native maples (Figure 3), is caused by a similar but distinct species, *Rhytisma americanum* (Hudler et al. 1998). It has been reported in the mycological literature for many years (Conners 1967; Farr

Figure 2. Rhytisma acerinum *on a leaf of* Acer platanoides *(Norway maple), DAOM 220644.*

et al. 1989; Ginns 1986) that *Rhytisma acerinum* was the cause of tar or black spot disease of native North American species of *Acer* as well the introduced Norway maple. However, according to Hudler et al. (1998) and Sinclair and Lyon (2005), *Rhytisma acerinum* does not infect native North American species of *Acer*, but is restricted to *Acer platanoides* in North America and Europe as well as several other maple species in Europe. The host indices (Conners 1967; Farr et al. 1989; Ginns 1986) cited above do not indicate the occurrence of *Rhytisma americanum* in Canada and the United States, as this name was not published until 1998. It can be assumed that any published records of *R. acerinum* on native North American species of maple are in fact *R. americanum* and not *R. acerinum*. Likewise specimens of black or tar spot on native North American maple species which have

Figure 3. Rhytisma americanum *on a leaf of* Acer rubrum *(red maple), DAOM 151779.*

been misidentified and deposited as *R. acerinum* in North American mycological herbaria are mostly likely *R. americanum*.

The less conspicuous *Rhytisma punctatum* (Figure 4), commonly called speckled or small maple tar spot, also occurs on native North American maples (Sinclair and Lyon 2005), including bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*), Manitoba maple (*Acer negundo*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and mountain maple (*Acer spicatum*). Speckled tar spot also occurs in Europe. It is not as commonly seen in suburban areas or city parklands where introduced rather than native maples often are planted. *Rhytisma punctatum* produces clusters (up to 15 mm across) of tiny tar spots each about 1 mm across.

Figure 4. Rhytisma punctatum *on a leaf of* Acer spicatum *(mountain maple), DAOM 184522.*

The disease symptoms and life cycles of both *R. acerinum* and *R. americanum* have been outlined in considerable detail by Hudler et al. (1998) and also by Sinclair and Lyon (2005). In the spring, the upper surfaces of immature maple leaves are infected by ascospores released from the fungus stromata or tar spots on overwintered fallen leaves on the ground from the previous autumn. The fungus infection produces pale green to yellowish spots on the upper surface of the new leaves in late spring or early summer due to a loss of chlorophyll in the leaf cells. During the summer the two *Rhytisma* species produce a second form of fungus spore, conidia of the form genus *Melasmia*, in the leaf spots. The conidia are formed within flattened fruiting bodies called conidiomata about a millimetre across. Conidia are produced more abundantly in *R. acerinum* than in *R. americanum*. By the late summer or early autumn, black stromatic fungus tissue develops in the yellowish leaf spots among the conidiomata, eventually coalescing to produce the stroma or tar spot visible to the naked eye. If leaf infection is especially heavy, individual tar spots may coalesce into larger tar spots.

The disease symptoms of *R. punctatum*, speckled tar spot, differ from *R. acerinum* and *R. americanum*. In *R. punctatum*, the tar spots are noticeably smaller and clustered and easily distinguished from the other two species on maple. Also, in *R. punctatum*, the chlorophyll often does not disappear from the infected areas of the

leaf but is retained even after leaf senescence so that the small stromata or tar spots are produced within islands of green leaf tissue on a yellowish to reddish leaf (Sinclair and Lyon, 2005; Figure 4).

Raking and burning or trashing of fallen infected leaves may help to reduce infection of nearby trees the following spring although it is virtually impossible to remove all sources of infection. In any case, infected trees as a rule do not drop leaves early or in sufficiently great numbers to threaten the general health of the tree, even though infection may appear to be severe in a given year.

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Book Review: Trails and tribulations: Confessions of a Wilderness Pathfinder

Luke Périard

Trails and tribulations: Confessions of a Wilderness Pathfinder, is written by Hap Wilson. There are 27 illustrations by the author or Ingrid Zschogner. It was published in 2009, is 203 pages long and is a documentary look at life exploring and working in the great outdoors. The cost of the softcover book is $26.99. It is a very interesting read and a great book for explorers, campers, hikers and, all nature lovers. It is a collection of short stories, some are comedic, but most are about his

experience with people and his and their relationship with the outdoors. Hap Wilson has written several other books, such as: The Cabin: A Search for Personal Sanctuary; Canoeing and Hiking Wild Muskoka: An Eco-Adventure Guide; Canoeing, Kayaking and Hiking Temagami; Rivers of the Upper Ottawa Valley: Myth, Magic, and Adventure; and Missinaibi: Journey to the Northern Sky.

The book is well written through the point of view of the author. The first chapter begins with the author telling us about his career as a forest ranger, clearing and maintaining trails in the Temagami. But, after a few years, he realizes that this work isn't for him. So, he finds work as an outfitter, which also wasn't for him because he starts to see how unprepared, overconfident, inconsiderate and unaware people can be about the outdoors.

The next chapter recounts his time as a wilderness guide, where he leads ill prepared people who have no wilderness survival or whitewater canoeing skills. From that experience, Hap learned how to judge his clients and about the human psyche. This chapter contains entertaining stories of his most interesting and unique characters that sign up for his trails. There's one funny account where he unknowingly puts a group together consisting of four hard-core marines with four gay men!

As the book progresses, he gets into describing the addictive art of trail building, in which he has 30 years of experience. On page 49 he says: "90% of people think trails just happen." I have to admit, I was one of those people until I read this book. At the end of that section, he explains how trail building is one of the methods used in "ecotage," the sabotage in the name of environmental protection. After reading part one of the book I had a tremendous urge to go into the outdoors and try to experience some of the fun of just "living off the land." It sounded so easy, all I had to do was make sure I had the right camping gear and I could live life backpacking the trails across the forests.

In part two of the book, each chapter is devoted to a few of the many ways of dying in the wilderness. He tells several stories where he came very close to succumbing to hypothermia, animal attack, inaccurate maps and inexperience. Here he is getting into the realities of nature and is trying to assure you that nature can't be tamed. After reading this part, I started to appreciate the comforts of my home, and realized that I would never survive on my own out there, but it is also the part of the book that is the most interesting.

Part three opens with a few chapters illustrating his experience with the supernatural. This part was also interesting to read because this is where he recounts some of his camp "ghost stories." This section you must read late at night, alone in your bedroom, with only the bedside lamp on. Near the end, in the second last chapter, he

writes about his work in saving and preserving canoe routes in the pine forests of the Temagami. The last chapter is about the Maple Mountain Trail, and some stories of when Hap was working to improve the trail and even some stories of when he was hiking trail himself. There's a couple of stories of when he spent a night, on two separate occasions, in one of the old fire watchtowers.

The book has a lot of interesting and exciting short stories, many illustrating his adventures and expeditions out in the woods. The early chapters are appropriate because they give you the background, in order to understand and have a better feeling for the atmosphere of his expedition stories. His goals are to show us that nature can be neither beaten nor tamed, and to make us aware of the slow destruction of the Canadian forest through deforestation. This is clearly demonstrated through his stories, especially the ones where he was an environmental activist and was spiking trees. He also describes other ways of slowing down or stopping the logging companies by creating trails to bring hikers to the areas that are looking attractive to the logging companies. Other ways that he points out the methods of deforestation is by campers who accidentally set off huge forest fires. One of his stories describes the deforestation of the top of Maple Mountain. Yet the way he makes you aware of the vastness and challenges of the backwoods are in his chapters that describe the different ways of dying in the outback. These chapters point out how unforgiving nature can be for just one little mistake. These stories back up his point that when we are out there, we are not in control. We need to pay our respect to, and revere, nature.

As expected from a book about natural settings, there are plenty of stories that describe the allure and humbling aspects of nature, making you look forward to your next camping trip:

> *"As the sun sets across Shethanei Lake, the tops of the spruce trees facing the light glowed brilliant orange, as if suddenly splashed with fire. We couldn't climb the pile of boulders quick enough getting to the top, each rock glowing like hot coal. But it was just the ambient light of the sun, projected oddly through the haze of smoke Tadoule, natural, yet amorphous, casting such brilliance over the landscape. It seemed to have a spectral purpose."*

In conclusion, this non-fiction story book will keep your interest and make you aware more specifically of the dangers of the outdoors but also of its vastness and beauty. Its illustrations are appropriate to the text and are a nice break between pages. The chapters are short, around 10 pages, and some of the illustrations are maps of the land, lakes and rivers he describes to keep you from getting "lost."

Longer range trips - anyone interested?

Roy John[1]

Recently I discussed the possibility of a joint OFNC- Quest with the General Manager, of Worldwide Quest International. This would allow OFNC to offer field trips far from Ottawa, as we are currently limited to more local trips by the Travel Industry Act [O.Reg. 26/05 s 2(2) 8]. We could arrange North American tours of 8 to 9 days, for a max of 8 people that would cost 2.5 to 3 thousand CAD. This would include hotels [e.g. Best Western], road transport, meals, park entry fees, and boat trips. It would not include airfare. The exact cost would depend on the time and place we choose. The choice of destinations includes: Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan etc..

Before we define the itinerary and schedule, choose and contact hotels, vehicles and drivers, boats and ferries, local guides and select restaurants, a huge amount of work, I would like to have your comments. All of you, please let me know if you are interested and are likely to take one or more trips in the next few years. Please also let me know if you are not interested and are unlikely to take such a trip. Please respond by the end of October 2009 (*r.john@rogers.com*).

If the response is strong enough I will proceed to develop a trip for 2010.

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[1] Roy is the former-Chair, E&L Committee and an occasional Quest tour leader

Orconectes immunis Hagen, 1870 (Calico Crayfish): A New Cambarid Species for the Ottawa District

Eric Snyder

Introduction

In this article, I describe the circumstances surrounding the first confirmed observation of *Orconectes immunis*, the Calico or Papershell Crayfish, from the Ottawa District within Ontario. After discussing this and one other Ottawa District record, I shall briefly review the literature on the crayfish's distribution in the province. Lastly, I shall offer some thoughts on the question whether *O. immunis*, a native species of Ontario, is introduced in the Ottawa District south of the Ottawa River.

Ottawa District Records

On 29 May 2009, I observed and photographed a specimen of *O. immunis* at the Richmond Conservation Area in Richmond, Ontario. This is the first record of *O. immunis* for the Ottawa District within the province. The specimen had been collected earlier that day, downstream of the Richmond weir in the Jock River, by two Rideau Valley Conservation Authority field staff in the course of completing Macro Stream Assessment and Ontario Benthic Bio-monitoring Network protocols. The collectors were Adrienne Lewis and Julia Sutton. The specimen was a mature female, as evidenced by the numerous juvenile instars attached to her pleopods. She was released into the river a few hours after being collected.

There is another record from within the Ottawa District, in Québec, dating from 31 August 2004. On this date, Laurent LeSage, research scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, collected twenty three adult crayfish specimens in the southwestern bay of Lac Saint Pierre in Val-des-Monts (Jean Dubé, pers. comm. 30 June 2009). In April 2006, Jean Dubé identified them as *O. immunis*, and noted the inclusion of both female and sexually mature male specimens in the collection. Dubé and Desroches (2007) report additional records from the northern reaches of the Gatineau River, outside the boundary of the Ottawa District. Hence, the crayfish might be expected to also occur in the southern reaches of this river, within the district boundary.

Another suspected locality for the species within the district, is the Carp River near Galetta. On 21 July 2001, Frederick Schueler, Isabelle Picard and I observed chimney-like mounds in the eroded mud of the river bank at the Galetta Side Road bridge crossing. Frederick Schueler interpreted these as possible burrows of *O. immunis*, but additional field work is needed to confirm this record.

Figure 1. Locations of Orconectes immunis *records in the Ottawa District marked with a star. Base map courtesy of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.*

These records are reproduced in detail in the appendix at the end of this article.

Distribution in Ontario

Occurrences of *O. immunis* have been recorded from across the province. With the exception of southwestern Ontario, where it is abundant and widespread, the crayfish's known distribution is localized and discontinuous. This distribution pattern, together with the fact that *O. immunis* is believed to be the most commonly used live bait crayfish species in the northern United States and Canada (Taylor et al, 2005), has led many writers to conclude that, more probably than not, it has both an introduced and native range in Ontario.

Barr (1996) writes that the crayfish's provincial distribution exhibits "a southwestern focus." No doubt this alludes to the fact that about 80% of the approximately 170 known localities of *O. immunis* occurrences in the province are in the region of southern Ontario to the south and west of Lake Simcoe (Berrill, 1978; CMN, 2009; David et al, 1997; Edwards et al, 2009; Hamr, 2003, 2007; ROM, 2009; Schueler, 2009). As stated above, in this part of Ontario, the species is widespread. Its distribution extends from the Detroit River and Lake Saint Clair east to the Niagara River and the western side of Lake Ontario, and north to Georgian Bay and Lake Huron (Barr, 1996; Ontario Nature, 2008).

In regions of southern Ontario that are east of Lake Simcoe, there are considerably fewer records of the crayfish. In fact, there are records from only seven localities:[1] Chemong Lake and Big Bald Lake in the Kawarthas, Little Long Lake and Mississagagon Lake in Frontenac County, Lake Opinicon at Chaffeys Locks [2] in Leeds County, Rainbow Lake in Lanark County [3] and the most recent from the Jock River in Ottawa (Berrill, 1978; Crocker and Barr, 1968; CMN, 2009).[4] The crayfish's distribution in this part of the province has been described as poorly documented (NHIC, 2001; cf. Barr, 1996).

Central Ontario has the second highest number of records of any region of the province, perhaps because it is a popular destination for anglers (cf. Crocker and Barr, 1968; NHIC, 2001). In the late 1960s, Crocker and Barr (1968) published five records based on specimens collected from four lakes within Algonquin Provincial Park. These are Brewer, Costello, Kearney and Opeongo Lake. At present, occurrences have been reported from 20 central Ontario localities (Brie Edwards,

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[1] The Royal Ontario Museum has no voucher specimen corresponding to an eighth locality mapped in Figure 78 of Crocker and Barr (1968). This is in the southwest part of Lennox and Addington County, apparently in the vicinity of Napanee. There appears to have been an error made in producing this map (Don Stacey and Maureen Zubowski, Royal Ontario Museum, pers. comm. 2 and 7 July 2009).

[2] Apparently it is in decline at this locality due to the introduction of *Orconectes rusticus*, the Rusty Crayfish (Catling and Kostiuk, 2005).

[3] This record is based on a specimen collected by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority field staff as part of Ontario Benthic Bio-Monitoring Network sampling in 2008 (Adrienne Lewis, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, pers. comm. 22 July 2009).

[4] A possible fifth record exists for Moose Creek in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Counties, based on a collection made in July of 2004 (Schueler, 2009). However, the three specimens collected at this site are juveniles and their identification as *O. immunis* is tentative.

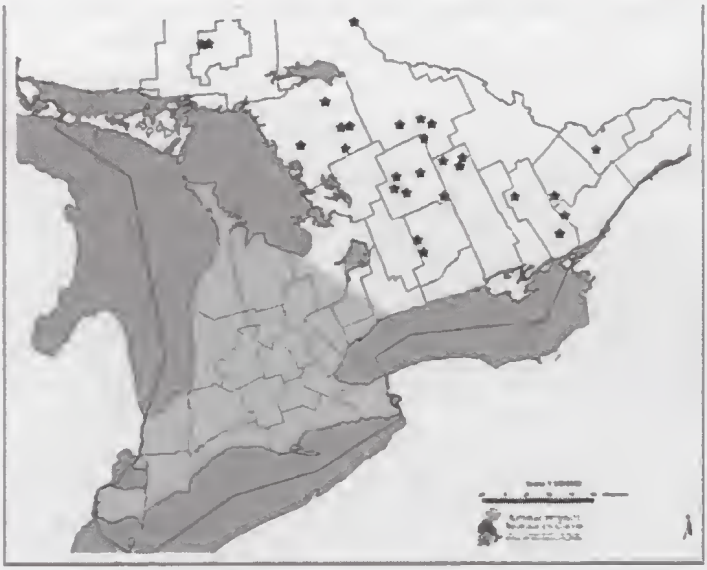

Figure 2. Known distribution of Orconectes immunis *in southwestern Ontario represented by light grey shading; eastern and central Ontario records marked with a star. Base map courtesy of the Natural Heritage Information Centre, Ministry of Natural Resources.*

pers. comm. 10 Sept. 2009; David et al, 1997; Hamr, 2007; ROM, 2009; Schueler, 2009). These localities range from Paudash Lake, south of Algonquin Park in Hastings County, to the northern reaches of the Ottawa River, east of Sudbury near Thorne, and west to Crab Lake and nearby Cartier Lake, northwest of Sudbury (Schueler, 2009; Taylor et al, 2005).

In northwestern Ontario, *O. immunis* is known from the eastern side of Lake of the Woods, in the area of Snake and Whitefish Bay, and has been discovered more recently in the northern parts, throughout Ptarmigan Bay, Clearwater Bay and Corkscrew Channel (Geard, 2007; Mosindy, 2006; Schueler, 2009; Taylor et al, 2005). These records are far outside the known range of the species in the rest of Ontario.[5] Mosindy (2006) and Geard (2007) both describe the crayfish as non-native in this region.

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[5] The closest Canadian records are from the drainage of the Red River, south of Winnipeg, Manitoba (CMN, 2009; Popham and Hancox, 1970; Schueler, 2009). It is unknown whether or not these occurrences are the result of introductions. *O. immunis* has not been assigned a sub-national rank in Manitoba (NatureServe, 2009).

Status in the Ottawa District

O. immunis is notably absent from Bousfield's 1969 *Crayfish of the Ottawa Region*, published in volume three of this quarterly. Could it have been overlooked since the late 1960s, or has it either been introduced to or spread into the Ottawa District during the intervening years?

Southeastern Ontario appears to be the part of *O. immunis*' provincial range where its native status is the most uncertain. There seem to be two principal reasons for the uncertainty. First, as Crocker and Barr (1968) write, the crayfish's distribution in this region "is concordant with its continental range and so we are not completely safe in classifying these records as introductions." [6] Second, as noted above, both Barr (1996) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (NHIC, 2001) have identified the need for greater documentation of *O. immunis*' distribution in the eastern part of the province. There is insufficient evidence to definitively describe its occurrence in the region. Taking these considerations together, it might be concluded that the fact that the eastern Ontario records are few and far between could be explained with equal probability by a low search effort as by hypothesizing a history of occasional introductions and localized spread.

The same difficulty arises with respect to the question of *O. immunis*' native status in southern Québec. Dubé and Desroches (2007) allow that the crayfish might be native to the Eastern Townships, principally because recent records indicate that it is widespread in this region. However, with respect to other occurrences in the province, there are a number of reasons to doubt its native status. First, in regions such as western Québec, the crayfish's distribution is localized and discontinuous, as it appears to be in eastern Ontario. Second, there were very few records for the province prior to the mid 1990s; in fact, only four prior to 1996 (cf. Dubé and Renaud, 1994). This might suggest that in the case of Québec, as in that of eastern Ontario, low search effort could explain *O. immunis*' apparently localized distribution. However, the third reason offered by Dubé and Desroches (2007) counters this conclusion, at least in some cases: at some localities where *O. immunis* has been recorded, it is not known to have been present before the late 1990s.[7] At

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[6] In a later statement that appears to be made in support of the same conclusion, Barr (1996) writes that the post-glacial establishment of the species in southern Ontario may have resulted, in part, by means of a northwesterly dispersal around the eastern end of Lake Ontario from the Atlantic coastal drainage.

[7] Whether this reason counts definitively against the crayfish's native status across most of southern Québec depends on how many localities are in question, how often they were searched and what search methods were employed at them. This is not the place to examine these questions.

Figure 3. Orconectes immunis *specimen from the Jock River at Richmond, Ontario. Photograph by Eric Snyder.*

these locations it would seem that introduction as a result of live bait movement is the more probable explanation of the occurrence; particularly considering the prevalence of this species in the live bait industry (Taylor et al, 2005).

A similar case can be made for the Ottawa District. Whether or not low search effort explains the relative paucity of *O. immunis* records throughout most of eastern Ontario, this does not appear to be true of Ottawa and its environs. In addition to Bousfield's observations on crayfish species' distributions from the 1960s, there are numerous Ottawa District crayfish records dating from the 1970s to the present day. In the period between January 1975 and July 2009, Frederick Schueler amassed 236

Ottawa District records with only the one unconfirmed *O. immunis* record mentioned above (Frederick Schueler, pers. comm. 8 July 2009).[8] Hence, it seems more probable than not that the record from the Jock River at Richmond is documentation of a recent introduction.[9]

It has been suggested, furthermore, that *O. immunis* should be regarded as a regional invasive threat in the district because of adaptations to drought that might enable it to displace the native *Orconectes virilis*, the Northern or Virile Crayfish (Frederick Schueler, pers. comm. 8 July 2009).

Conclusion

In view of records from both western Québec and other parts of eastern Ontario, the presence of *O. immunis* in the Ottawa District, south of the Ottawa River, is perhaps not surprising. It is somewhat surprising, however, that it has only been found decades after the initiation of sustained efforts by a few field naturalists to collect and document crayfish in the district. This suggests that *O. immunis* is a recent introduction here and, if that is the case, the movement of live bait seems to be the most probable means of its arrival.[10] The impacts of its arrival, if any, will no doubt be recounted to Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club members in future editions of this quarterly.

Acknowledgements

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[8] EOBase contains 535 crayfish records from the same period, associated with localities within a hundred kilometres of the Bishops Mills Natural History Centre, none of which are confirmed records of *O. immunis* (Frederick Schueler, pers. comm. 8 July 2009).

[9] Significantly, collections of three other *Orconectes* species were made from the Jock River at the Richmond Weir in August 2000 and 2001 (Frederick Schueler, pers. comm. 4 September 2009).

[10] It should be noted that the *Ontario Fisheries Regulations*, enacted in October 2007, prohibit the transport of crayfish overland except under a Licence to Collect Fish for Scientific Purposes issued under the province's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997.

Mosindy (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources), Frederick Schueler (Bishops Mills Natural History Centre), Keith Somers (Ontario Ministry of the Environment), Don Stacey (Royal Ontario Museum), Bev Wigney, John Zoltak (Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters) and Maureen Zubowski (Royal Ontario Museum).

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Appendix – Ottawa District Observation Records

1. ORGANISM: *Orconectes immunis* (Hagen, 1870) (Cambaridae) (Calico Crayfish or Papershell Crayfish). COUNT: one. LIFE STAGE: adult. COUNTRY: Canada, PROVINCE: Ontario, MUNICIPAL DISTRICT: city of Ottawa, Goulbourn ward, LOCATION: - Village of Richmond, Jock River ca 100m downstream of weir, in Richmond Conservation Area

COORDS: Lat/Long: 45°11′47.7′′, 75°49′37.6′′; UTM: 18 T 0435031 5005114 (WGS 84); HABITAT: - riffle, open water of small river with substrate of calcareous rubble becoming muddy towards the shorelines; depth ca 30-60cm - aquatic vegetation: - *Ceratophyllum demersum* (Hornwort), *Elodea canadensis* (Common water-weed), *Spirodela polyrhiza* (Greater duckweed), *Sagittaria cuneata* (Northern arrow-head), *Potamogeton zosteriformis* (Flatstem-pondweed), *Potamogeton epihydrus* (Ribbonleaf-pondweed), *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (European frog-bit); - riparian vegetation: *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed canary-grass), *Vitis riparia* (Wild grape), *Acer negundo* (Manitoba maple), *Cornus sericea* (Red osier-dogwood), *Salix*

Call for Nominations for OFNC Awards

The Awards Committee

It is time to think back and consider those OFNC members (and, in one case, even non-members) who, by virtue of their special efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition.

The Club has seven awards: Honorary Membership, Member of the Year Award, George McGee Service Award, Conservation Award for OFNC Members, Conservation Award for Non-Members, Anne Hanes Natural History Award, and the Education Award.

An elaboration of each of these categories is presented in this centre-fold, together with spacc to put the nominee's name and accomplishments. (Additional sheets can be used if needed.) If necessary, the Awards Committee will seek out more information on individuals nominated, but of course, the more information you provide, the easier it is for the committee to make a decision. An informative article on thc background of these awards, and a list of former recipients, was published in Volume 33, Number 4, of *Trail & Landscape*. Last year's awardees are highlighted in the previous issue of *T&L*. The deadline for the submission of nominations is December 31, 2009. Nominate as many individuals as you like, but be sure to give your reasons. Return the nomination form to the Chair of the Awards Committee:

Eleanor Zurbrigg
c/o The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069 Westgate P.O.
Ottawa, ON
K1Z 1A2

If you have any questions regarding the nominations, feel free to contact Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair of the Awards Committee, through the Club number at 613-722-3050, or at the Club website *ofnc@ofnc.ca*.

NOMINATION FORM FOR AWARDS

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

In the appropriate spaces, please submit the names of those you wish to nominate for OFNC awards and your reasons for each nomination. The more information you provide, the more effective will be the assessment of nominees. Attach additional information if the space is inadequate. Nominations may be made for more than one person. The Awards Committee may contact you for further information regarding any of your nominations.

Name of Nominator:_____Email_____

Address:_____Telephone_____

HONORARY MEMBER: This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member, or non-member, to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. [Usually people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years. At present honorary membership is limited to 25 people.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

GEORGE MCGEE SERVICE AWARD: In recognition of a member or members who has (have) contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

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ANNE HANES NATURAL HISTORY AWARD: In recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. [The award is designed to recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

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EDUCATION AWARD: For members, non-members or organizations, in recognition for outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. Potential recipients would include museum personnel (both professional and volunteer), biology teachers, talented and dedicated field trip leaders, authors popularizing local natural history, and other educators of children or adults.

Nominee:_____

Reasons for nomination:_____

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CONSERVATION AWARD - MEMBER: In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member (or group of members) in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District [The area within 50 km of the Peace Tower in Ottawa.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

CONSERVATION AWARD - NON - MEMBER: In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member (or group of non-members) in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District. [The area within 50 km of the Peace Tower.]

Nominee_____

Reasons for the nomination_____

nigra (Black willow), *Frangula alnus* (Glossy buckthorn); DATE: 29 May 2008; TIME: 9:30 – 11:30 hrs (EST); WEATHER: Cloudy, intermittent rain, heavy at times, ca 18°C; BASIS OF RECORD: Sight, photographs. OBSERVER: Eric Snyder, Julia Sutton, Adrienne Lewis, Michael Yee. DETERMINER: Eric Snyder. REMARKS: The crayfish was a large female with a clutch of juveniles under its tail.

2. ORGANISM: *Orconectes immunis* (Hagen, 1870) (Cambaridae) (Calico Crayfish or Papershell Crayfish). COUNT: twenty three. LIFE STAGE: adult. COUNTRY: Canada, PROVINCE: Québec, MUNICIPAL DISTRICT: Municipalité de Val-des-Monts, LOCATION: - southwestern bay of Lac Saint Pierre, near the municipal beach
COORDS: Lat/Long: 45.4149N, 75.4252W; HABITAT: thick stand of *Sparganium* and other emergent plants growing on mud substrate in clear, probably slightly acidic water; DATE: 31 August 2004; TIME: unknown; WEATHER: unknown; BASIS OF RECORD: Sight, specimens. OBSERVER: Laurent LeSage. DETERMINER: Jean Dubé.
REMARKS: Fourteen of the specimens are female, one is a form I male and eight are form II males.

3. ORGANISM: Cf. *Orconectes immunis* (Hagen, 1870) (Cambaridae) (Calico Crayfish or Papershell Crayfish). COUNTRY: Canada, PROVINCE: Ontario, MUNICIPAL DISTRICT: city of Ottawa, West Carleton ward, LOCATION: - Carp River at Galetta Side Road bridge
COORDS: Lat/Long: 45.46102N, 76.19629W; UTM: 18TVF 64.4 346.4 (NAD 83); HABITAT: - stream with rocky and clayey substrate, through pasture;
DATE: 21 July 2001; TIME: 16:16 – 16:38 hrs (EST); WEATHER: Lightly overcast, breezy, ca 30°C; BASIS OF RECORD: Sight. OBSERVER: Frederick W. Schueler, Isabelle Picard, Eric Snyder. DETERMINER: Frederick W. Schueler.
REMARKS: Several chimney-like mounds on an eroded bank; maybe mole burrows.

Addendum – Ottawa District Record Acquired Post Acceptance
Following the acceptance of this article, I learned of five additional records of *O. immunis* in Ontario, established as a result of field work during the summer of this year. Four of these are from lakes in central Ontario: Fawn Lake, Grass Lake, Langford Lake and Lipsy Lake (Brie Edwards and Keith Somers, pers. comm. 10 September and 8 September, 2009; cf. Edwards et al, 2009). These records are now mapped in Figure 2. The fifth record originates in eastern Ontario. It is the result of a search by Frederick Schueler, which was motivated by work on this article. It is from within the Ottawa District, at the town of Metcalfe (Frederick Schueler, pers. comm. 10 September 2009).

Books

Roy John

The most important piece of equipment for an aspiring naturalist is—no, not fancy binoculars— but your note book. Every serious naturalist should keep a note book, kept in whatever way suits you. Mountain Equipment Co-op sells a waterproof note book called 'Rite in the Rain' that actually works, and requires only an ordinary pencil.

The second essential item is a field guide. For the novice the best bird guide is still the Peterson *A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America.* This book gives a limited number of plumages, does not include many of the rarities or unusual plumages. It concentrates on critical field marks and this is the easiest way for a beginner to identify birds [and gain experience and confidence]. If you go out once a week or so for two years you will become skilled enough to move on to a more complex book like National Audubon's *Sibley Guide to Birds* [there is also east and west regional guides] or the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America.* These books have a lot more information and detail, as well as full coverage of North America. I occasionally still use the Peterson *A Field Guide to the Mammals* and *A Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians* as field books. However I now tend to note the characteristics of an unknown species and use the large-sized or specialized *The Snakes of Canada* [Froom], *Mammals of Canada* [Banfield] or the *Smithsonian Book of North American Mammals* [Wilson and Ruff]. How many new North American mammals do you see each year?

The best book I have found for wildflowers in Eastern Canada is *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide.* It has a non-technical keys system that works most of the time. The Peterson *A Field Guide to the Wildflowers* and the Audubon Society Field Guide is arranged by flower colour and is easier for the beginner with no knowledge of botanical terms. Lone Pine Publishing offers several good books such as *Ontario Wildflowers*, *Wetland Plants of Ontario* and *Forest Plants of Central Ontario.* In the west I favour *Wildflowers Across the Prairies* [Jowsey and McLean] and *Wildflowers of the Canadian Rockies* [Scotter and Flygare]. Two fine new books are *Wildflowers of the Rocky Mountains* [Scotter and Flygare] and *Plants of Alberta* [Royer and Dickinson].

The best book for butterflies is *The Butterflies of Canada* [Layberry, Hall and Lafontaine]

Do not rely on field guides forever. If you do then you never get past the field mark state. Leave them at home and look at the whole bird, plant, mammal etc. If you do not recognize the species make notes and work it out at home. It will force you to see more.

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series written by Roy John. In writing this series, Roy has used his years of experience and breadth of knowledeg to share his opinions an a wide variety of topics which, I believe, will be of interest to many OFNC members.

Turnaround

Robert Nero

One cold day in September
and we were already thinking winter
listing chores to perform in readiness
for the long cold days and nights,
but now it's November and we're
still enjoying autumn sun
with not a bit of snow to see;
so we affect the good days
worring about the future
though I'm glad the work is done.

Annual Fall and Christmas Bird Counts

Chris Lewis

Ottawa-Gatineau Fall Bird Count

The 15th annual Fall Bird Count will be held Saturday October 18 to Sunday October 19, 2009 beginning at 3:00 p.m. on the Saturday, and ending at 3:00 p.m. on the Sunday. The post-count dinner and compilation (free pizza, coffee and soft drinks for all participants!) will be held after the count ends on Sunday, at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre from approx. 4:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.. Participants for the Ontario side may contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551, email *edticknor@sympatico.ca* .Those who wish to participate on the Québec side may contact Garry McNulty for the northwest sector, phone 819-684-9861 or email *gmcnulty@videotron.ca* and Daniel St-Hilaire for the northeast sector, phone 819-776-0860, or email *nodan@videotron.ca*.

Ottawa-Gatineau Christmas Bird Count

This year's Ottawa-Gatineau CBC will be held on Sunday December 20. Please contact Eve Ticknor (see above) to participate on the Ontario side. For the Québec side, please contact Daniel St-Hilaire (see above). The specific sector leaders have not yet been decided, however the contact people should be able to provide more information closer to the date of the event. Details re: the post-count compilations and dinner will be provided by the sector leaders.

We encourage you to come out for these great traditional birding events in the Ottawa-Gatineau area! You don't need to be an "expert" birder to join in—even counting birds at your feeder from the comfort of your own home, can be an important contribution. The more participants the better, to discover what's out there in our area during the fall and winter seasons!

Seedathon 2009

Chris Lewis

Since 1981, the OFNC has held an annual "Seedathon" to raise funds for the purchase of bird seed to keep the feeders supplied by the Club well-stocked each winter.

The event has typically been conducted as a "Big Day in the 50K", usually in early September. It's an all-day venture out to various areas within a 50 Km radius of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill, to find as many bird species as possible.

From 2000-2008, the team of Bob Bracken, Bernie Ladouceur and Chris Lewis have been "your Seedathon team" and we have had great success, not only with finding birds (our record was 134 spp. in 2006!!) but with receiving generous pledges from many sponsors.

In this, our 10th year as your team, we plan to have another great day out, and we hope that sufficient funds can be raised to keep the OFNC feeders up and running.

Our previous sponsors will have been contacted prior to the event. However, the cost of purchasing and storage of bird seed is ever increasing, and we always try to drum up new business to support this very worthy cause. Therefore, you may choose to sponsor us any time! In fact, many OFNC members choose to send in their Seedathon $$ along with their annual membership renewal. If you'd like to do so, please mail your cheque to:

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069 Westgate P.O.
Ottawa, ON, K1Z 1A2

PLEASE INDICATE THAT THIS IS FOR THE SEEDATHON

Sponsors who pledge $10.00 or more will receive a tax receipt.

The OFNC feeders are enjoyed by many members of the public, and the dedication of the volunteers who maintain them has been truly remarkable; one couple (Roy and Gerry Millen) has been looking after the Jack Pine Trail feeder for 30 years!

Summaries of our Seedathons, as well as maps to the feeder locations can be found on the Birding page of the OFNC web site *www.ofnc.ca*

On behalf of the OFNC and birds of Ottawa-Gatineau—we sincerely thank you for your support!

Bird Highlights from the 50 K and Environs: January – June 2009

Chris Lewis

WATERFOWL

Our region had its share of interesting waterfowl this year. Six separate sightings of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported from all compass points around Ottawa and Gatineau. The number of spring migrant **Snow Geese** continues to grow in Eastern Ontario, with large flocks moving through in April and early May. Brian Morin (Parks Canada) reported: "On April 4, a check of many of the traditional locations for Greater Snow Geese in Eastern Ontario by Tyler Hoar resulted in a staggering total of 88,000 birds in 39 flocks. The greatest concentrations were north of Lancaster and at Williamstown. Then, on May 4, an aerial survey of Greater Snow Geese by Canadian Wildlife Service biologists revealed a total of approximately 61,000 birds at over 10 locations, including most of the known sites. The South Nation River area at Chesterville had the largest total with over 18,000 birds in two concentrations. This was their largest total for the annual flight, topping last year's record." A large flock was also reported from the Alfred lagoons on 22 April. Smaller groups and singletons were noted throughout the 50K, and a couple of stragglers were still at the Alfred and Embrun lagoons on 30 May and 16 June respectively.

Ross's Goose sightings also appear to be increasing annually. At least three, possibly four, individuals were noted to the west and east of Ottawa from early April to mid-May. One observer had the pleasure of a "five goose day in the 50K" with **Greater White-fronted, Snow, Ross's, Cackling** and **Canada Goose** on 11 May, an achievement that topped a similar event on 20 April 2008. This year, all five species were found in *the same location!* **Brant** are typically the latest geese to pass through our area in spring; several flocks flew through in the third week of May and the first week of June and loners also lingered at St. Albert and Embrun into June.

All three species of North American swans were found in April and May. An adult **Mute Swan** at Marais des Laîches on 12 April was not reported after the 15th, and brief observations of **Tundra Swans** were made on the Ottawa River off Andrew Haydon Park (an adult and an immature on 14 April) and Constance Creek near Dunrobin (a first summer bird on 02 May). Two adult **Trumpeter Swans** first reported on 06 March, on the Mississippi River in Carleton Place, were sporadically seen until the 16th. A first summer bird spent three weeks (04-24 May) at the

Embrun lagoons and generated some interesting exchanges of photographs and discussions about its identity—a very interesting learning experience regarding a species that was finally deemed "countable" in Ontario in 2007.

Among the duck highlights were **Eurasian Wigeons**. Although it's certainly possible that the two males found in the 50K could have been one and the same, the discoveries occurred east of Bourget (30 March-03 April) and at Marais des Laîches (16-26 April). **Surf Scoters**, a rare sight in spring in Ottawa, were reported from Shirleys Bay on 11 May and 02 June. A **White-winged Scoter** was an odd fellow at the Embrun lagoons on 30 May, but it's not the first time a sea duck has appeared in a sewage pond. **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were again faithful to at least two traditional locations on the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers. A rather late male hung around the rapids at Britannia until 22 April and even decided to check out Mud Lake in the Britannia Conservation Area (BCA) on one occasion.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS, LOONS, GREBES, CORMORANTS & HERONS

No real changes were noted in the status of our resident gallinaceous birds, i.e. **Gray Partridge**, **Ruffed Grouse** and **Wild Turkey**. Small coveys of partridge and large flocks of turkeys were seen in a wide variety of locations. A gang of three turkeys amused passersby at a bird feeder near the Hurdman bridge all winter until at least the second week of March.

Common Loons began to show up in early April and both **Horned** and **Red-necked Grebes** dotted the Ottawa River later that month. In early May the small but growing **Double-crested Cormorant** colony near Lemieux Island began its fourth year of nesting. The largest (**American**) and smallest (**Least**) of our **bitterns** were found in appropriate habitats on both the Québec and Ontario sides. Curious though, was the lack of reports from what is usually the most productive location for spotting Least Bitterns, the Marais aux Grenouillettes. Numerous visits to this area failed to turn up a single one, perhaps due to the very high water levels this year. Perfect conditions for the **Black Tern** colony, but maybe not so for the little bitterns? **Great Egrets** were reported from various sites along the Ottawa River from late March to late June and a couple were seen flying over Stoney Swamp on 10 May. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** of all ages appeared on several occasions at the BCA and elsewhere, and a pair was seen constructing a nest among the Ring-billed Gull colony at Deschênes in April; if successful this would be their third year.

VULTURES & RAPTORS

Good numbers of **Turkey Vultures** graced our skies this spring, and each year brings increasing reports of **Bald Eagles** of all ages in ever expanding locations at all times of year. The most reliable area to see wintering **Golden Eagles** is still the Eardley escarpment of the Gatineau hills with most of the reports in January and

February coming from the Eardley-Masham sector. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** again spent the early part of the year in the vicinity of Old Carp Rd. west of Kanata. Breeding **Cooper's Hawks** are nothing new in the BCA, however this year's pair, an adult male and an immature female, attracted a lot of attention with their conspicuous courtship and territorial displays.

In the realm of falcons, the ratio of sightings of **American Kestels** vs **Merlins** was consistent with observations over the past 10 years; the latter far outnumbered the former, especially in urban and suburban settings. Reports of **Gyrfalcons** in the New Year included a white bird near Quyon on 05 January and a grey fellow on the ice above the Deschênes Rapids on 15 March. Most of the local **Peregrine Falcon** observations were of the resident adult pair in or near downtown Ottawa. By mid-April four eggs were in the nest on the Crowne Plaza Hotel and two young hatched in early May. The 13th annual Falcon Watch began on 07 June and by the 21st both youngsters had successfully fledged. By all accounts, the young male became an excellent flight artist and even a bit of a show-off early in his career. While his much larger sister was more reluctant, she eventually caught on to the fact that flying is what Peregrines are born to do.

RAILS, GALLINULES, CRANES & SHOREBIRDS

All of our common rails and gallinules returned to their preferred habitats, and it's always a thrill when the **Sandhill Cranes** arrive to feed in the fields near their breeding grounds in the Mer Bleue bog. The first report of four cranes was on 21 March.

With apologies to warbler lovers, the most exciting migration event in the spring of 2009 was a massive movement of shorebirds. Eastern Ontario never gets the numbers and diversity of species witnessed farther south along the Great Lakes, but what we got was pretty impressive. A harbinger of things to come was a **Willet** at the Alfred lagoons on 18 April. The big wave began in May with large numbers of **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** dropping in to the excellent feeding habitat at the eastern sewage lagoons, and it just kept getting better. Rarities included **Hudsonian Godwits** (one at Alfred on 26 May and another at St. Albert a couple of days later), another **Willet** at Embrun (29-30 May), a **Western Sandpiper** (31 May), and a **Ruff** in breeding plumage at Marais aux Grenouillettes (05-07 May). Several **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Ruddy Turnstones**, **Sanderlings**, **White-rumped Sandpipers** and **Short-billed Dowitchers** were among the numerous **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, **Least Sandpipers** and **Dunlin** (the last in the multiple 100s) that appeared in just about every wet area in the region. **Wilson's Phalaropes** nested again at Embrun, a long-time breeding area, and nearly every local lagoon hosted one or two **Red-necked Phalaropes** with at least one remaining at Embrun until 07 June. **Upland Sandpipers** were reported from a few locations in the 50K in May and June. In all,

25 species of shorebirds were found, an excellent spring tally for our part of the province.

LARIDS

A brief visit by an adult **Little Gull** at the Deschênes rapids (28-29 May) was a highlight during the annual mass emergence of mayflies that also attracted up to 30 **Bonaparte's Gulls**. Earlier in the year, good numbers of **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** were reported at or near the Trail Rd. landfill as well as on the ice of the Rideau River by the Hurdman bridge. At least six **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were seen in the vicinity of the landfill during the first week of April. Although **Caspian Terns** are regular only a couple of hundred kilometres southwest of Ottawa, only one or two usually wander up here each spring/summer. This year, an early summer heat wave possibly influenced an influx of multiple birds. The first sighting on the Ottawa River on 23 June was followed by a report of FIVE together on a sandbar near the Quyon—Fitzroy ferry dock on the 24th and two at Shirleys Bay on the 25th. **Black Terns** and **Common Terns** arrived on schedule (first week of May). Dynamic weather in late May – early June often brings **Arctic Terns** to the Ottawa River and this year was no exception. Ten were seen flying up the river at Constance Bay on 24 May, and a few more occurred from 31 May-02 June at Deschênes. Who knows how many actually pass through every year?

CUCKOOS, OWLS AND WOODPECKERS

Although both **Black-billed** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** breed in the 50K, the latter remains rare. However a few intriguing reports of Yellow-billed's came from different sites in Gatineau Park in May and June, including the Meech Creek valley where nesting was confirmed last year.

Anther season of controversial and questionable human behaviour toward owls prompted the OFNC Birds Committee's decision to no longer broadcast the whearabouts of these belcagucred birds on the status line or the internet. Sightings for the local records are always welcome and are valuable contributions to the long-term picture of patterns and trends in owl populations and movements. Resident species such as **Great Horned, Barred, Long-eared** and **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were all reported from typical locations. In 2008, Birds Committee initiated a project to construct and install nest boxes for **Eastern Screech-Owls** in the hope of encouraging the local population of this sensitive species. A major irruption of **Snowy Owls** that began in the fall of 2008 continued through the winter and several lingered well into spring; whether this was due to an abundant natural vs. artificial food supply is not clear. A young Snowy approaching and begging food from cars stopped along the road near Ste-Rose in mid February was certainly not normal behaviour. Also unusual were a couple of adults observed long past the time they normally head up to their far northern breeding grounds: one appeared along Hwy 17

in the commercial district of Arnprior (07-15 June) and a mature male that spent the entire winter in rural Nepean was still being seen as late as 10 June. At least four different **Northern Hawk Owls** were seen during the winter months, a couple of them in suburban locales. One that lingered in the Crystal Beach area continued to attract "owlarazzi" until the end of February. A dozen or more **Great Gray Owls** were widely reported on both the Ontario and Québec sides. Three that became fixtures in the Dunrobin area were still being baited for the entertainment of people wielding various types of optical equipment into mid-April. A couple of **Boreal Owls** that showed up in January unfortunately did not fare well—a bird near Shirleys Bay evidently starved to death, and the remains of another near Constance Bay indicated that this tiny predator probably fell victim to predation itself.

On a happier note, a pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** returned for their eighth consecutive breeding season at Constance Bay. **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** were pleasant surprises—one each in the months of March, April and May—and a male **Black-backed Woodpecker** was a regular diner at a dead White Pine on a property in Poland (west of Lanark) during the month of January.

PASSERINES

Apart from our regular flycatchers, a couple of **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** passed through on 23 and 31 May and a spectacular vagrant, a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, was found on Heriot Island along the Long Sault Parkway on 30 April and remained until 03 May. **Northern Shrikes** were rather scarce compared to some winters. Apparently this was just not a major irruption year into our region, but a few remained into early April. A new breeding site for **Common Ravens** in Ottawa was the BCA. A nest high in a White Pine near the edge of Mud Lake did not stay inconspicuous for long after two robust young began to exercise their wings and voices. Both the adults and the young were very active until the end of May when the nest was finally empty. On 27 June a group of six ravens goofing around together at the east end of the BCA led one observer to speculate that the Britannia youngsters may have been joined for some aerial fun and games by the four offspring from the Carlington quarry nest. This is at least the 14th successful year for ravens breeding at the former quarry which has for many years been utilized as a major City of Ottawa snow dump.

Three **Carolina Wrens** over-wintered—two were last reported on 19 March in the Riverview and Hampton Park neighbourhoods and one lingered in Aylmer, Québec until 20 April. **Sedge Wrens** were found in the Richmond fen this spring and with special effort this continues to be one of the more consistent places to find this species. Other colonies in the 50K have seemed more ephemeral, but is this due to changes in breeding habitat conditions? Or are birders just not visiting these locations at the right time of day? Sightings of migrant **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers**

came from the BCA on 25 April and 04 May. A **Varied Thrush** that began frequenting a feeder near Watson's Corners west of Lanark on 17 December 2008 was still enjoying its provider's generosity into early March. **Northern Mockingbirds** continue to hold their own in the 50K. From January through June, single birds and a couple of couples were seen in diverse locations including Crystal Beach, the national arboretum, Orleans, Aylmer, and the international airport. Like the Northern Shrikes, **Bohemian Waxwings** were not as numerous as in some years but several good-sized flocks roved the local landscape into early spring.

Each year birders anticipate the annual spring warbler migration with a mixture of optimism and anxiety— will there be any great fall-outs? Will any rarities show up? By all accounts the Point Pelee migration scenario this year was phenomenal, and very early—an unprecedented 34 species of warblers occurred by the end of April, a number usually associated with the middle of May! Up here in the 50K, the movement of our expected visitors and breeders was a more leisurely affair. In addition to the usual 25 species that arrived on their own flight schedule, a locally rare **Blue-winged Warbler** was a nice find on 22 May in exactly the same area where another rarity, a singing male **Prothonotary Warbler**, was found on 28 May 2007. Although some might describe this spring's songbird migration as lackluster, we would do well to remember that the only birds that "want" to be at migrant traps such as the BCA or Shirleys Bay are the ones that breed here. Non-residents would much prefer to be on their breeding grounds ASAP, and when any window of opportunity presents itself (such as a clear calm break in a period of cloudy windy weather) they don't stick around long at the human-favoured hot spots. In eastern Ontario and the Outaouais we are blessed with a rich diversity of habitats, and our breeding birds might be the envy of those who can hope to see many species only on migration. Just one example is the eastern or "yellow" subspecies of **Palm Warbler.** While the western subspecies is an abundant breeder in northern Ontario (in fact one of the most common birds in the province) the more brightly-coloured eastern fellows have a more restricted area in Ontario . . . and they just happen to call our neck of the woods home. Donald Sutherland writes in the 2001-2005 Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA): in the Mer Bleue bog, "a small breeding population has been known for more than 100 years . . . at least 10-12 pairs are estimated to occur in the Mer Bleue, while in the more extensive habitat in the Alfred Bog, a population in excess of 100 pairs is estimated."

Among our breeding embezerids, **Eastern Towhees** are always a favourite. One of their strongholds continues to be the Carp ridge. Another traditional area for sparrows did not disappoint—the fields south of the international airport were frequently visited and nine species were regularly reported including good numbers of **Clay-coloured, Field, Vesper** and **Grasshopper Sparrows. Lincoln's Sparrows** nested again in that local treasure trove, the Mer Bleue bog, and a rare-in-

winter **White-crowned Sparrow** frequented a feeder for a few days (17-19 January) in Deschênes, Québec. While no significant numbers of **Lapland Longspurs** were locally reported this year, a late surprise was a female in a new residential development in Barrhaven on 25 May.

Several highlights in the icterid department included two **Western Meadowlarks**, both in Québec outside the 50K. A very vocal and accommodating individual was discovered along Lac des Loups Rd. on 21 June and resided here until at least the beginning of July. The other was also found in June farther west along the Ottawa River on Allumettes Island. In Eastern Ontario small to moderate numbers of **Rusty Blackbirds** generally migrate through from mid-April to early May. This year very few were reported until a mass movement evidently occurred in late April—over 5,200 were counted flying north over the Richmond fen on the 30th. As with many other species this spring, the cool and windy weather may have kept them backed up, but when it's time to go, they gotta go! Also of interest was a rare **Orchard Oriole**; a male banded at the Innis Point Bird Observatory on 28 May was the third record for this species at this location.

Finches certainly livened up the landscape, as an influx that began in the latter part of 2008 continued into the New Year. **Pine Grosbeaks** occurred in good numbers until mid-March, with the largest flocks seen in the Carp and Dunrobin areas in late January. Two male **Red Crossbills** (Sarsfield, 05 January) and a pair (Larose forest, 14 March) were the only ones of this species reported in our region, but **White-winged Crossbills** and **Common Redpolls** were widespread in both rural and urban locations, and a few **Hoary Redpolls** appeared among the flocks of Common's at several feeders until late March. **Pine Siskins** were ubiquitous well into June, and at least one nesting pair was confirmed in a residential area in Gloucester. And where were all the **Evening Grosbeaks**? Apparently in Poland, where feeders on a property in this village west of Lanark (not the country in Europe) hosted a mother lode of over 60 birds from January into the first week of April.

The information in this article was derived from reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line (613-860-9000) and *sightings@ofnc.ca* , personal observations and communications, postings to the Ontario Field Ornithologists listserv (Ontbirds) and information on the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais web site *www.coo.ncf.ca*. The OFNC web site and the Neilyworld web site by Larry Neily are highly recommended resources for a wealth of information about birding in and around the region. To all who contributed their sightings—thank you, and good birding!

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Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.
For further information,
call the Club number (613-722-3050).

Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.

ALL OUTINGS: *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (Payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Monthly meetings are held* in **The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.** Attendees may have to pay $5 parking per vehicle.

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 613-860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 613-860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Please note that our **October 13** monthly meetings will be held in the **K.W. Neatby Building, Salon B, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue.** Parking is available in a lot just east of this building.

We return to the **Canadian Museum of Nature,** Victoria Memorial Museum Building (VMMB), in **The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor** for our **November, December, January, February,** and **March** meetings. The entrance to the museum is on McLeod Street.

The VMMB is a heritage building and is undergoing preventative maintenance, renovation and emergency repair. The Museum will ensure a safe passage within the building and to and from the parking areas but makes no other warranties as to the aesthetic appearance due to construction materials being on hand or structures being erected on the premises (i.e. scaffolding, temporary walls, temporary signage, etc.). There is usually a $5 parking charge in the Museum parking lot per vehicle.

Saturday	**FUNGAL TRIP**
3 October	**Leader**: George White.
8:30 a.m.	**Meet**: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza at 8:30 a.m., or meet George (*gwhite@lincsat.com*) at 9:30 a.m. at the 5-span bridge in Pakenham by the waterfalls. (Connie Clark coordinator.) This will be a joint outing with the Mcnamara Field Club. We shall visit the Spicer property near Pakenham to look for all kinds of macro and micro fungi including Myxomycetes (slime molds), Discomycetes, Ascomycetes, coral fungi, jelly fungi, puffballs and other kinds of mushrooms. It will be a well rounded fungus foray. A hand lens or magnifying glass would be handy. Photographers will want to bring their macro lenses. Wear hiking boots and bring a lunch.

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

Tuesday	**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**
13 October	**BIRD BANDING: A TOOL FOR MIGRATORY BIRD**
7:00 p.m.	**RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION.**
Social & Club	**Speaker:** Lesley Howes
business	**Location:** K.W. Neatby Building, Salon B, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue. Parking is available in a lot just east of this building.
7:30 p.m.	Lesley will speak about the Canadian Bird Banding program and
Formal	its importance as a tool for research, monitoring and
Program	conservation. She will provide information on what data are collected while a bird is in the hand and will mention specific indicators for ageing and sexing birds and determining their reproductive condition. Lesley is the Bird Banding Biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Saturday
17 October
3:00 p.m.
to
Sunday
18 October

OTTAWA-GATINEAU FALL BIRD COUNT

The 15th annual Fall Bird Count will begin Saturday October 17 at 3:00 p.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Sunday October 18, 2009. The post-count dinner and compilation (free pizza, coffee and soft drinks for all participants!) will be held after the count ends on Sunday, at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre from approximately 4:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Participants for the Ontario side may contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551, email *edticknor@sympatico.ca*. Those who wish to participate on the Quebec side may contact Garry McNulty for the northwest sector, phone 819-684-9861 or email *gmcnulty@videotron.ca* and Daniel St-Hilaire for the northeast sector, phone 819-776-0860, or email *nodan@videotron.ca*.

We encourage you to come out for these great traditional birding events in the Ottawa-Gatineau area! You don't need to be an "expert" birder to join in—even counting birds at your feeder from the comfort of your own home, can be an important contribution. The more participants, the better to discover what's out there in our area during the fall and winter seasons!

We return to the **Canadian Museum of Nature**, Victoria Memorial Museum Building (VMMB), in **The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor** for our **November, December, January, February,** and **March** meetings. The entrance to the museum is on McLeod Street.

There is usually a $5 parking charge in the Museum parking lot per vehicle.

Sunday
25 October
9:30 a.m.

A TRIP THROUGH TIME - THE LAST TWO MILLION YEARS IN OTTAWA

Leader: Jan Aylsworth (613-592-2805), Fenja Brodo coordinator.

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza (or Erskine Johnstone Public School Kanata—our first stop).

Few Canadian cities have as wide a variety of geology and as extensive a geological history as does Ottawa. At various times, our mountains have been as high as the Himalayas, our seas have been as warm as Australia's and as cold as the Arctic Ocean, earliest fossils have been preserved, major earth movements have ripped our rocks along great faults, and huge rivers have flowed over us. Visit these sites and understand the ground beneath your feet. Pack a lunch to be enjoyed at Mer Bleue and we shall end at the Lemieux landslide. Sturdy shoes would be best especially if it is wet.

Thursday
29 October
7:30 p.m.

LIVING ON EARTH AS IF WE WANT TO STAY

Speaker: Mike Nickerson

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Interpretation Centre.

Wildlife is under pressure as humans breach the thresholds of tolerance of both natural resource extraction and waste. Biodiversity is threatened as are our children's children. Still, our leaders call for growth everlasting. A different path is the topic of Mike Nickerson's book "Life, Money and Illusion; Living on Earth as if we want to stay." Mike will join us for a discussion about how our system of mutual provision (the economy) can be transformed into a form that serves the interests of wildlife and future generations alike. More at:

http://www.SustainWellBeing.net/challengeandgoal.html.

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

Sunday
1 November
9:30 a.m.

LICHENS OF OLD WOODS—WHITE LAKE AREA

Leaders: Ernie Brodo 613-723-2054 and Rob Lee 613-623-8123

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road, near Pizza Pizza. (or meet at Stone Bridge, Pakenham at 10:30 a.m.).

With the guidance of Rob Lee, who knows this area and its lichens very well, and Ernie Brodo, we shall explore some lichen-rich woodlands, including a cedar swamp, a 150 yr. old hard wood forest, and areas with marble bedrock. This will be a full day outing and is suitable to novices as well as folks already familiar with some lichens. It takes a little over an hour to drive to the area. Bring a lunch, drinks, suitable footwear—it may be wet in places. A hand lens (10 X or 14 X) would be an asset in order to see the smaller species and to learn about the characteristics of the larger ones. This will not take place if it rains. Call 613-723-2054 for uncertain weather.

NOTE: daylight savings time ended midnight the day before.

Monday
9 November
8:00 a.m.

FALL MIGRATION ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER

Leader: Tony Beck

Meet: The Coliseum Theatre Parking Lot, east side, 3090 Carling Ave., east of Bayshore.

Lac Deschênes is a significant staging area for many migratory birds, especially in November. We will check it for a variety of birds including gulls, shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds.

Tuesday
10 November
7:00 p.m.
Social & Club business

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

STORIES FROM THE SUBCONTINENT—A NATURALIST'S RAMBLES IN INDIA

Speaker: Justin Peter

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.

7:30 p.m.
Formal Program

India presents the naturalist with some of the world's greatest contradictions. Much of the country's wildlife faces an uncertain future while the human population balloons. Yet many wild species thrive. Justin has visited India three times and will share some of his experiences and observations during this illustrated talk. Visit some of India's signature heritage sites, see the countryside and people, and of course, some of its amazing wild things and places! (This talk, originally advertised for Dec. 2008, had to be rescheduled because of extremely bad weather.)

Tuesday	**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**
8 December	**THE OFNC: IN THE FIELD FOR 130 YEARS**
7:00 p.m.	**Speaker**: Dan Brunton
Social & Club business	**Location**: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.
7:30 p.m. Formal Program	Canada's oldest and largest local naturalists' organization passed its 130th anniversary this spring. Remarkable as that record of survival and contribution is, it actually understates the achievement of the OFNC which actually traces its origins to the time *before* Confederation. The road from there to here has been a twisty one, marked by both success and tragedy, by substantial victories and more than a few defeats. Above all there are fascinating people and events and places that mark the passage past all those twists and turns. That's what we will learn about in this presentation as we explore almost a century and a half of the history of natural history in the Ottawa Valley.

Sunday	**FAMILY OUTING TO JACK PINE TRAIL**
13 December	**Leader:** Fenja Brodo (613-723-2054)
2:00 p.m.	**Meet**: Jack Pine Trail, Moodie Drive, Parking Lot # 9
	Whether or not we have snow, this trail is always a good one for kids because the big OFNC feeder will be well-stocked with seeds and should attract woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees as well as squirrels. Bring binoculars if you have them and seeds for tempting the birds to your hands—which is always a thrill. We shall explore the trails so probably warm, waterproof footwear would be appropriate. (Call Fenja if the weather looks questionable.).

The VMMB is a heritage building and is undergoing preventative maintenance, renovation and emergency repair. The Museum will ensure a safe passage within the building and to and from the parking areas but makes no other warranties as to the aesthetic appearance due to construction materials being on hand or structures being erected on the premises (i.e. scaffolding, temporary walls, temporary signage, etc.).

Sunday
20 December

OTTAWA-GATINEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year's Ottawa-Gatineau CBC will be held on Sunday December 20th. Please contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551, email *edticknor@sympatico.ca* to participate on the Ontario side. For the Quebec side, please contact Daniel St-Hilaire at 819-776-0860 or email *nodan@videotron.ca*.

The specific sector leaders have not yet been decided upon, however the two contact people should be able to provide more information closer to the date of the event. Details about the post-count compilations and dinner will be provided by the sector leaders. We encourage you to come out for these great traditional birding events in the Ottawa-Gatineau area! You don't need to be an "expert" birder to join in—even counting birds at your feeder from the comfort of your own home, can be an important contribution. The more participants, the better to discover what's out there in our area during the fall and winter seasons!

Saturday
2 January

DUNROBIN-BRECKENRIDGE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

To participate please contact Bruce Di Labio at 613-839-4395 email bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca

For more information, check out Bruce's web page:

www.dilabiobirding.ca/cbc.html.

Sunday
10 January
8:00 a.m.
to
approx.
1:00 p.m.

WINTER SPECIALTIES

Leader: Bernie Ladouceur

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza

Bernie will lead you to the birding hot spots of the day to check out species that have been newly recorded as visitors to our area, as well as visiting areas that usually are good birding at this time of the year. Dress for the weather and bring drinks and a lunch. snacks and to help you enjoy this outing.

Car pooling on excursions is very much encouraged and that is why we usually try to meet at a convenient bus stop with a good place to leave a car unattended for a few hours. Please chip in for gas.

Tuesday	**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**
12 January	**THE 131ST ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**
7:00 p.m.	Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and
Review of	McLeod Streets, The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.
Minutes	The Council for 2010 will be elected at this meeting. There will
	be a brief review of the activities in 2009 and a statement of the
7:30 p.m.	Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most
Meeting called	of the Club's executive and the chairs of the various committees
to order	and to find out what makes your Club tick. Refreshments will be
	served.

Thursday	**POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK**
13 May	Our Club's next trip to Point Pelee will take place during the
to	spring migration of 2010. The cost is $450 for accommodation
Sunday	for three nights at the Comfort Inn in Leamington, based on
16 May	double occupancy, and includes breakfasts, bus transportation and
2010	taxes. A down payment of $100 will secure your place on this
	trip; book early to avoid disappointment. Call the Club number
	613-722-3050; mail your cheque to OFNC, Box 35069,
	Westgate P.O. As we did last time, we plan to shop for, and serve,
	two buffet lunches and will be asking for $14 per person, on the
	bus, for those wishing to participate. People bringing your own
	lunches are invited to join us for drinks, fruits and snacks at $4
	each. Dinners will be at several local restaurants.

DEADLINE: *Material intended for the January - March issue must be in the editor's hands by November 1, 2009. Mail your manuscripts to:*

Karen McLachlan Hamilton,
2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7
H: (613) 838-4943; email: ***hamilton@storm.ca***

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webmaster@ofnc.ca

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